

Indra and His Importance

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Discussion

Throughout most of the course of Naruto, people have viewed Hagoromo(Sage of the Six Paths) as the overall god of shinobi. This idea was tampered down with the introduction of Kaguya and his brother Hamura. However, people still view him as the catalyst of the modern shinobi world.

I beg to differ.

Hagoromo was the one who developed ninshuu. This was a method of connecting humans via chakra. In "modern" times, no one does this at all. Rather, people use ninjutsu. This was a way of forcing chakra out of one's body to perform certain tasks that did not necessarily include fighting at its very beginning. As we know, it's mostly used for combat now.

As most of you know, Indra was the one who at a very young age developed the first practical uses of ninjutsu. These uses extended throughout his lifetime and even after his death. "History" has shown that ninjas are some of the main people who influence the world. What is the main tool of a ninja? Ninjutsu. Not ninshuu. So it begs the question, who is the real god of shinobi. Hagoromo, whose ninja art did not really last, or Indra, whose ninja art is still widely used to "this day."

I understand that Hagoromo could do all of the things that Indra could do, but he did it without the utilization of chakra because of his strong genetic ties with Kaguya.

However, Indra developed the use of hand signs to manipulate the chakra within one's own body. So, that's why I say he is more important. His method lives on to this day.

soma81

As most of you know, Indra was the one who at a very young age developed the first practical uses of ninjutsu.

It's been a while since I've read the manga, but didn't this only happen in the anime?

TLCplLogan

I'm pretty sure the manga doesn't say that Indra invented ninjutsu, but it does heavily imply that Hagoromo did not.

djghostface292

[djghostface292](#)

The thing is though, Hagoromo's ninshu practically allowed him to use jutsu without performing any hand signs. He could basically control all of the nature transformations as if he was the Avatar or something. No one else knew how to do this and Indra figured out how to force the chakra out of his body to create ninjutsu through the use of hand signs.

They used nishu for practical uses...like for farming and fires i believe just not war. yeah indra is the god of war, but they needed hagoromo first to give everyone chakra or they couldn't use it for war.

[MadBase](#)

Well there are some reasons Hagaromo is more well known. First of all Indra is mostly forgotten by history completely, the only ones who knew about him besides Black Zetsu were Obito and Madara who didn't even know the real story behind him.

Secondly, it most likely that Indra and Asura died pretty young with their fued and all, while Hagaromo is still around and spread his ninshu all across the world for who knows how long.

And lastly, according to the Sage Indra was always alone, meaning he probably shared his invention with little to no people.

[pdmt243](#)

[rokudaimehokage](#)

Indras development of ninjutsu is non canon and therefore not recognized by the majority of the Naruto fan community.

Why is Indra important in Buddhism?

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[Harry C Emberson](#),

Tibetan Buddhist, Studied under Tai Situ Rinpoche et al

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Indra is a Hindu concept. In Buddhism, the name Sakra is an epithet for Indra in Buddhist cosmology but has none of the same characteristics and is not directly related to Buddhist practice. In Buddhist cosmology Sakra sits at the top of Mt Merru, but this is an ideologically visualization used in vajryana Buddhism which is also represented in sand mandalas.

But, of course, the point of creating a sand mandala is to ritually destroy it to reinforce the concept of impermanence.

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[Min Khin Kyaw](#), I've been studying Theravada Buddhism for decades.

Sakka is not Indra. Saka was Maga a youth who was a chief of a village. That village was in chaos, didn't have proper infrastructure, proper system. When Maga became its chief, he changed everything. He organized young people. 30 of them followed him and 31 of them in total built roads, dug wells, etc. The village became prosperous and people were happy.

The king heard about him and became jealous. The king accused him of rebellion and killed him and his team of 30. When he died, he became Sakka the king of gods as the other 30 also became gods.

Maga the king of gods was the one who asked the Buddha about mangala. So the Buddha taught him **Mangala Sutta**. If Sakka never asked, nobody else would have asked.

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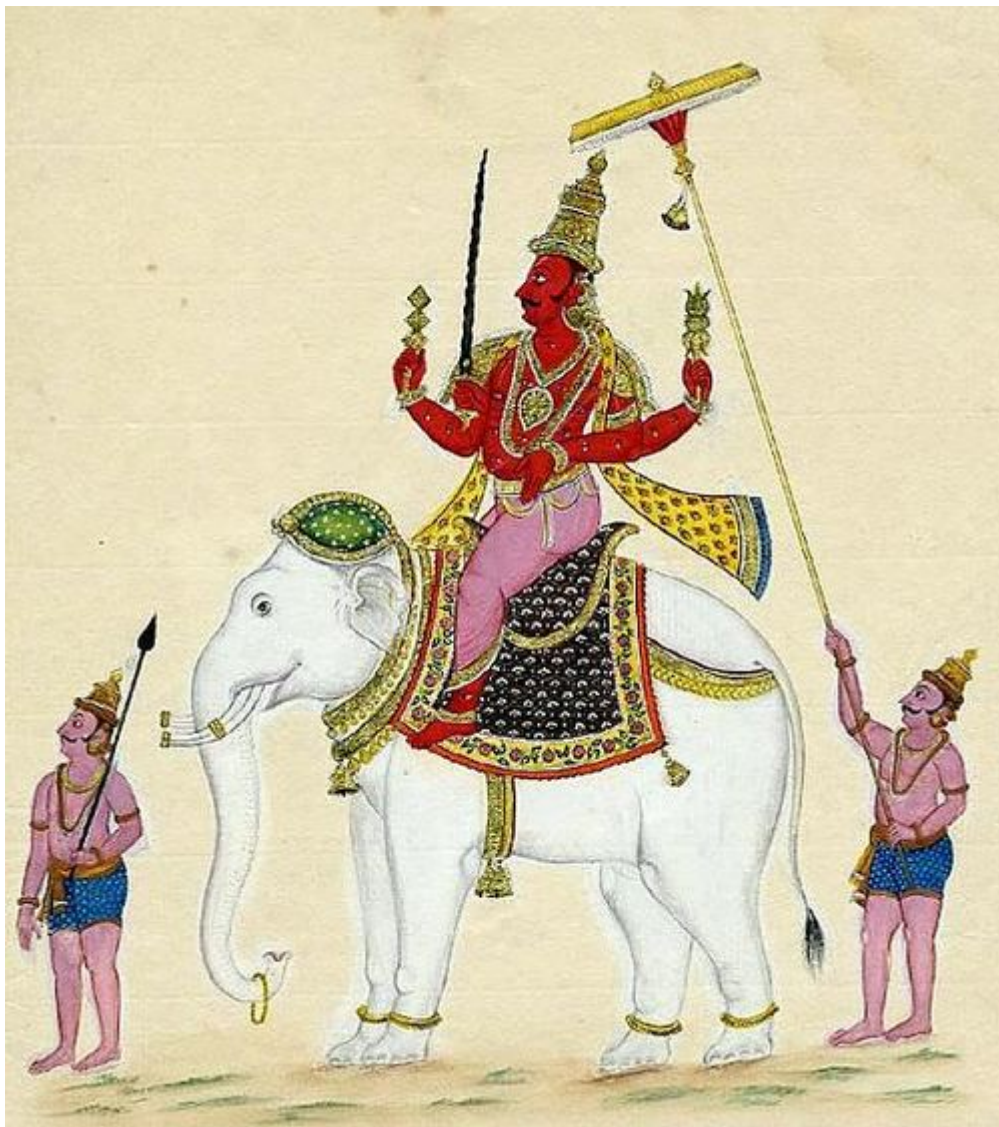
Indra



by [Mark Cartwright](#)

<https://www.ancient.eu/Indra/>

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The anthropomorphic god [Indra](#) was the most important god in the

Vedic [religion](#) and he later became a major figure in [Hinduism](#) and an important deity in [Buddhism](#), Cham and Chinese tradition. For the Aryas he was their national god and he was regarded as the protector of the military aristocracy and the Kshatriyas warriors.

The formidable thunderbolt-wielding Indra strikes an imposing figure but as king of the gods he is generally benevolent, being generous to his worshippers, guaranteeing peace and prosperity and delivering beneficial rainstorms to end droughts.

He can also be called upon in times of [war](#) to give support with his divine weapons and favourable intervention.

In later tradition Indra is transformed from a worshipped god into a mythological figure involved in various, sometimes unflattering, adventures whilst gods such as [Vishnu](#) and [Shiva](#) replace him at the head of the [Hindu pantheon](#).

Nevertheless, Indra continued to be associated with storms, rain and the cardinal point East.

God of Thunder & Storms

In the Hindu creation myth Indra was born (along with his brother [Agni](#)) from the mouth of the primordial god or giant Purusha whose various other body parts gave birth to the other members of the Hindu pantheon.

These new gods then brought order to the cosmos and Indra, seated on his throne within the storm clouds of the *svarga* or third heaven is ruler of [the clouds](#) and skies alongside his wife Indrāni.

In Indian [mythology](#) the clouds are equated with divine cattle and the sound of thunder during storms is Indra fighting with the demons who are forever trying to steal these celestial cows.

In addition, the rain is equated with Indra milking his divine herd and the god is seen as a protector of earthly cattle belonging to his worshippers. Indra encompasses and controls the universe, balancing the earth in the palm of his hand and manipulating it according to his whim. He also created the rivers and streams by shaping the mountains and valleys with his sacred axe.

Indra has a favourite companion, his pet ape Vrishakapi, but his fondness for the creature did once incur the jealous wrath of Indrāni who then displayed amorous intentions towards Vrishakapi which were reciprocated and when the couple were discovered by Indra, the angry god drove the animal away.

However, the tables were turned when, later, Indra himself was discovered in the arms of Vrishakapi's wife by his once faithful pet. Thus being equal in their unfaithfulness the pair's great friendship was restored.

INDRA WAS KNOWN FOR HIS FONDESS FOR [SOMA](#), THE ALCOHOLIC ELIXIR.

Indra, noted for his virility, was unfaithful to his wife on several other occasions when the god often disguised himself in order to better seduce his victims. One famous object of the god's seemingly insatiable desire was the wife of the sage Gautama.

Sometimes Indra did though pay a heavy price for his amorous adventures, for example, he was once so brutally cut to pieces by an outraged husband that the gods struggled to put him back together again. When they did finally manage it they found a rather important piece of him missing and so were forced to complete the god using the member of a ram.

The Adventures of Indra

Indra appears many times in the Vedic scripts, especially the *Rig Veda* where he has all sorts of weird and wonderful adventures. In the [Sanskrit](#) epic [Mahabharata](#), Indra is the father of the hero [Arjuna](#) and he manages to win the magic armour that would make his son invincible. Indra was involved in a famous fight against the Dāsas (or Dasyus) and in another famous adventure he swiftly dealt with Vala who one day was bold enough to steal the god's herd of sacred cattle.

Vala cleverly hid his prize in the depths of a mountain but was tracked down by Indra's servants the Maruts or Rudras (storm gods), then, one thunderbolt from Indra was enough to split the mountain in two and release the herd who were safely escorted back to the heavens.

[Indra Sabha Cave Temple, Ellora](#)
[by Jean-Pierre Dalb  ra \(CC BY\)](#)

Indra's great friend and *prot  g  * Kutsa fought with Sushna ('the Witherer') and at the end of the day when the two were still in combat and darkness seemed about to halt the proceedings Indra delayed the sunset by yanking off a wheel of the sun's [chariot](#). Indra then gave the wheel to Kutsa who used it as a devastating weapon to win the fight.

Indra is, on occasion, portrayed in a less than favourable light in his adventures, for example, he is known for his fondness of the alcoholic elixir drink *soma* which he does not always take in moderation and so he sometimes suffers from its after-effects. However, the helpful [Ashvins](#) gods and the goddess [Sarasvati](#) are always on hand to administer an antidote taken from the body of a demon and restore the god to his senses.

Perhaps the most celebrated exploit involving the god is his [battle](#) with the demon Vritra. This demon, also known as the Enemy, had transformed himself into a fearsome snake with no less than 99 coils. Unfortunately for local farmers these tremendous coils were blocking up the rivers and streams and causing a great

drought. So horrifying was Vritra that none of the gods dared intervene and it was only Indra who found the courage, fortified with *soma*, to slay the beast with one of his thunderbolts. As a result of this episode he won great favour among the other great gods and one of Indra's surnames became Vritrahan, meaning the 'slayer of Vritra'.

[Indra, Java](#)

[by Osama Shukir Muhammed Amin \(CC BY-NC-SA\)](#)

In Other Religions

Indra is known as Sakra in Buddhism and he rules the 33 gods. In Cambodian tradition he is known as Pah En the god of the sky and he is the most popular of the gods. He is considered to live atop Mt. Meru or Prah [Sumer](#) along with his servants the Yeaks (Yashas), fearsome ogres with fangs and red eyes who can transform themselves at will into any shape they please.

In the Cham religion of Vietnam he is also the god of thunder and rides a white elephant. In Chinese tradition he is identified with the god Ti-shi. Finally, the god is still worshipped today in the Rajasthan region of [India](#) in the festival of Inder Puja which calls for rains to prevent the frequent droughts prevalent in this desert state.

Representations in Art

Indra is frequently portrayed wielding a thunderbolt (*vajra*) but he may also carry the *chakra* discus, an *ankusa* or elephant goad and an axe, the *tanka*.

He is often shown riding his white elephant Airāvata who was born from the churning of the seas when the world was created. In later Buddhism the god's thunderbolt becomes a diamond sceptre, the *Vajrayana*.

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EDITORIAL REVIEWThis article has been reviewed for accuracy, reliability and adherence to academic standards prior to publication.

Bibliography

- [Encyclopedia Britannica](#)

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What is the duty of Indra? What is Indraloka?

What is the duty of Indra given by God & what is in Indraloka that all rakhshasas and asuras want to win Indraloka? Do they get any power if they win Indraloka or is there anything like whoever wins Indraloka also rule Prithviloka?

[mythology](#) [indra](#) [lokas](#)

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indra is the position of man who is King in swarglok so he may have duties like maintenance of that loka. everybody wants to take over swargaloka to take the throne to enjoy the privileges or to show the power, some asura may also want to win 3 loka to be called triloka pati which includes mrityulok and swarglok and patal loka. Ruling Indraloka is not only part of winning one of loka but is important as a victory as that is lok where many of the demigods will be living so conquering swargaloka means they conquered the demiGods.– [Friendly Jul 17 '15 at 10:34](#)

@Friendly Indra isn't just the king of Svarga/Devaloka. He's king of the three worlds. – [Keshav Srinivasan ♦ Jul 17 '15 at 14:56](#)

@KeshavSrinivasan Three worlds? Are you serious? (So do all devas come under this category then? – [Surya Jan 17 '16 at 17:31](#)

@Surya Yeah, I'm serious. Indra and the Devas rule the three worlds. Higher Lokas like Maharloka, Janaloka, and so on don't come under their jurisdiction though. – [Keshav Srinivasan ♦ Jan 17 '16 at 18:10](#)

@Keshav But that doesn't mean worship them right? Except during Yajna that is? And that too when Krsna demonstrated how to protest against Indra Yajna? – [Surya Jan 17 '16 at 18:12](#)

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Indra is also called Surendra or Devendra meaning lord of celestials. The duties of

Indra are said in Vanaparva of Mahabharata.

When Skanda was born, all the celestials and rishis were happy that they found a mighty being who could slay Tarakasura who was a huge problem for the lokas at that moment. As he found many followers and dispelled the fears of devas and rishis with a short period of time, they ask him to be their leader. Then Kartikeya asked what are the duties of Indra.

Skanda replied, 'You gentlemen of great ascetic wealth (tell me) what Indra does with all three worlds and how that sovereign of the celestials protects the hosts of gods unremittingly.'

To this rishis replied with the duties of Indra:

'Indra is the giver of strength, power, children and happiness to all creatures and when propitiated, that Lord of the celestials bestows on all the objects of their desire. He destroys the wicked and fulfils the desires of the righteous; and that Destroyer of Vala assigns to all creatures their various duties. He officiates for the sun and the moon in places where there is no sun or moon; he even when occasion requires it, acts for (serves the purposes of) fire, air, earth, and water. These are the duties of Indra; his capacities are immense.

[Chapter 228 Vana Parva, Mahabharata](#)

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[Sarvabhuma](#)

In addition to what Sarvabhuma has mentioned, I am adding the following informations:

1. Another famous name of Indra is 'Purandara'.

purANi [ariNAm] dArayati iti purandarah : meaning that who destroys the abodes of the enemies is Purandara, ie Indra (Reference : Sri Sri ChanNdi, Udbodhan, page 83).

When Mahishasura defeated the deva-s,

he became the 'Indra' (Devi-Mahatmya, Machapter 2, Mantra 3)

All the devas including Surya, Indra, Agni, Vayu, Chandra, Yama and Varuna came to the earth and started to reside as ordinary human beings. (Ibid. Mantras 6-7).

So yes, whoever wins Indraloka seems to win the Prithviloka as well as all the devas

are then driven out of the heaven. Only Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara resided in their own lokas. They by their combined Aura along with the Aura of all deva-s created Devi Mahalakshmi Who slayed Mahishasura and returned the kingdom of heaven to the original Indra.

The Uttara-Charitra of Devi-Mahatmya mentions it more explicitly:

When Shumbha and Nishumbha defeated the deva-s, Indra, the husband of Sachi, lost his control on the three lokas (svarga-Martya-PAtAla) and the shares of the yajnas. (Chapter 5, mantra 2)

(Reference: Sri Sri Chandi, /Devi-Mahatmya, Madhyama Charitra, Udbodhan).

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As described in the **Shiva Purana**, Indra's duty was managing all kind of activity of world (Brahmand). Indraloka is the center of World and Capital of world. Who sits on Indrasan (seat of Indra) they get the power of Indra. That's why all asuras want to win Indraloka.

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[edited May 23 '17 at 13:46](#)



[Sarvabhuma](#)



[Jayesh Dengada](#)

Please cite verses of Shiva Purana which say this. – [The Destroyer ♦ May 23 '17 at 17:17](#)

It is a low quality answer. Add exact chapter in which this information is present. It looks like a comment. You can comment when you have 50 reputation. – [Sarvabhoudha May 24 '17 at 4:25](#)



The Gods have Amrita which gives immortality. When you conquer Indraloka I believe you get the source. One reason the asuras are always fighting for Indraloka and always losing.

Besides Amrita there's numerous other divine treasures in Indraloka. A wealth of material and spiritual power. It's full of divine sages, apsaras, this doesn't change when Indra leaves as we know from the incident when Nahusha replaced Indra. It's basically the same job as being an earthly king.

You get to indulge in any number of worldly pleasures. Deal with petitions from various groups in need, entertain visiting sages, the occasional curse. We know it involves almost unlimited power because Indra becomes more and more arrogant over time. Presiding over any number of sacrifices.

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<https://hinduism.stackexchange.com/questions/7803/what-is-the-duty-of-indra-what-is-indraloka>

Why Indra should be respected after looking at his affairs?

Indra is highly extolled in Vedas. From various stories, including Brahmana we find his various illicit relationships with other's wife. These stories make me to think why Vedas or scriptures giving respect to him? Or why he should be worshipped? Do

any scriptures explain why we should accept him even after knowing his deeds?

[indra](#)

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[Mr. Sigma.](#)

The post is worshiped. Whenever Indra did something wrong he was punished and even removed from the post of Indra, Yayati also happened to be Indra for time being due to this reason. Due to Ahalya's episode he was defeated by Meghnadh and as directed by Lord Bhrahma he performed few rituals and came out from that sin. In short, if he did something wrong he was punished and after sometime again attained the post of Indra.. – [YDS Jan 4 '18 at 4:18](#)

If one wanna judge a person then he has to judge him by seeing his both side. If one only sees someone's evil side but ignore his good side then this is not a good judgement. To judge Indra we have to see his good deeds and his work as king too. He is managing universe under his order with perfection. No one ever dare to put question on his works as king coz he is perfectionist. He did fullful all his dharma as king with great manner. First need to see both side of Indra and then judge Indra by overall character of him, not only by his evil side. He is great King without any doubt. – [Vishvam Jan 4 '18 at 4:40](#)

•

We worship Indra for his capacity to sustain the world as its administrator. The character of Indra in the scriptures is confusing - inspite of all his wealth and power, he has his phobias and weaknesses. One does not become Indra, just by chance. The accumulated punya of many janmas make one eligible to be an Indra in some Manvatara. Hence Indra is worthy of worship. As a piece of information, Srimad Bhagavatam mentions that due to his good deeds and charity - Bali Chakravarty - grandson of Prahalada - would be the Indra of Sauvarni Manvatara. He was pressed down to Sutla Loka by Vamana. – [Suresh Ramaswamy Jan 4 '18 at 7:02](#)

•

But why do you believe in puranic stories ? Do you think it's more authentic than vedas ? When both texts contradict then you know what to do right ? –

[Rakesh Joshi Jan 4 '18 at 9:43](#)

•

What wrong deeds has Indra done? It is only one Ahalya episode. And another is killing of Trishira. Even Chandra and Brihaspati abducted wives of others. You know, we have a bad image of Indra as Indra is shown cruel and bad in TV shows, whereas while reading Scriptures, Indra looks very gentle, calm and of sobre composure. – user12826 [Jan 5 '18 at 5:16](#)

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Indra should be worshipped because the Vedas ask us to worship him. That is reason enough. What more reasons do you want?

The Vedas, not only praise Indra as worship-worthy, but also ask us to make him the exclusive object of our worship.

Indram vo vishvatah pari,
HavAmahe janebhyah,
AsmAkam astu kevalah ||

Indra, standing above all, is called by the seekers. **May he be the exclusive object of our worship.**

Rig Veda 1.7.10

And, why only Indra, even Agni, who is the chief among Vedic Gods, is also described as having committed illicit crimes, as did Indra. And, we find the stories in the Vedas themselves.

The waters were the wives of Varuna; Agni longed for them, he had union with them; his seed fell away, it became this (earth); what second fell away became yonder (sky); this is the Viraj, yonder the Svaraj; in that he puts down two Viraj (bricks) he puts down these two (worlds).

Yajur Veda Book5, Part5.

But, Agni is still considered as the foremost among all the PAvamanas (purifying principles) of the Vedas. And, for him we have such verses as given below:

Agnim dutam vrnimahe, hotAram vishva vedasam, Asya yajnAsya sukratum ||

We choose Agni, the all-knower who, as our envoy, invites the Gods. He is the auspicious performer of yajna.

Rig Veda 1.12.1

Agnir murdhA divah kakut, patih prthivyA ||

Agni is the Head and Peak of Heaven and the Lord of this Earth.

Rig Veda 8.44.16

So, Vedas, themselves say that Agni committed such and such crimes, but yet they mention him as supremely worship-worthy. So, so be it. That is reason enough why Indra, Agni etc are to be worshipped.

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[Rickcross](#)

The wives or maidens not to be taken literally but symbolic. – [Rakesh Joshi Jan 4 '18 at 9:42](#)

•

May he be the exclusive object of our worship.----- Why?? – [Mr. Sigma. Jan 4 '18 at 10:17](#)

•

What kind of reasons do u want? "It is so said in the Vedas", that should be enough of a reason IMO. @Tamas. – [Rickcross Jan 4 '18 at 12:18](#)

•

But bro, we can worship any god. not exclusively him. – [Mr. Sigma. Jan 4 '18 at 12:33](#)

- 1

During marriage there are mantras like let agni take the maiden first and then the girl is married to the groom. this doesn't mean that agni literally comes and takes the bride as a wife. It's symbolic and purification process – [Rakesh Joshi Jan 4 '18 at 21:10](#)

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It's important to remember many Hindu scriptures tend to be highly metaphorical. Ancient sages used stories as instruments to convey a moral story.

It can be argued that the word 'Indra' is widely understood as 1) king of gods in heaven 2) the senses of the body (viz eyes, ears etc)

Now "Indra chasing other's wives" could also be interpreted as an ordinary man's affairs with other's women because his sense inspires him so.

Indra being extolled could also be understood as human senses being extolled. These senses, while they can be used to do bad, such as chasing other's wives, can also be used for productive purposes, including spiritual reasons. Hence the extollation

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answered Jan 4 '18 at 17:34



[Sikh and ye shall find](#)

Indra

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This article is about the deity in Indian religions. For other uses, see [Indra \(disambiguation\)](#).

Indra

King of the Gods

God of Lightning, Thunder, Rains and
River flows

King of Heaven



Painting of Indra on his elephant mount, Airavata.

Affiliation	Deva (Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism)
Abode	Amarāvati , the capital of Indraloka (Indra's world) in Svarga ^[1] , Trāyastriṃśa (Heaven of the 33), Mount Meru
Weapon	Vajra (Thunderbolt), Astras , Vasavi Shakthi
Symbols	Vajra , Indra's net
Mount	Airavata (White elephant), Uchchaihshravas (White horse)
Texts	Vedas , Puranas , Jātakas , Epics

Personal information

Parents	Kashyapa and Aditi
Consort	Shachi (Indrani), Sujā (Buddhism)
Children	Jayanta , Jayanti , Devasena , Vali and Arjuna
Greek equivalent	Zeus
Roman equivalent	Jupiter
Norse equivalent	Thor
Slavic equivalent	Perun

Indra (/ˈɪndrə/, Sanskrit: इन्द्र) is a [ancient Vedic](#) deity, a deity in [Hinduism](#),^[2] a guardian deity (*Indā*^[3], Pālī) in [Buddhism](#),^[4] and the king of the highest heaven called *Saudharmakalpa* in [Jainism](#).^[5] His mythologies and powers are similar, though not identical, to other Indo-European deities such as [Jupiter](#), [Perun](#), [Perkūnas](#), [Taranis](#), [Zeus](#), and [Thor](#).^{[2][6][7]}

In the Vedas, Indra is the king of [Svarga](#) (Heaven) and the [Devas](#). He is the deity of the heavens, lightning, thunder, storms, rains, river flows, and war.^{[8][9]} Indra is the most referred to deity in the *Rigveda*.^[10] He is celebrated for his powers, and the one who kills the great symbolic evil (malevolent type of Asura) named [Vritra](#) who obstructs human prosperity and happiness. Indra destroys Vritra and his "deceiving forces", and thereby brings rains and the sunshine as the friend of mankind.^{[2][11]} His importance diminishes in the post-Vedic Indian literature where he is depicted as a powerful hero but one who constantly gets into trouble with his drunken, hedonistic and adulterous ways, and the god who disturbs [Hindu](#) monks as they meditate because he fears self-realized human beings may become more powerful than him.^{[2][12]}

Indra rules over the much-sought *Devas* realm of rebirth within the [Samsara](#) doctrine of Buddhist traditions.^[13] However, like the Hindu texts, Indra also is a subject of ridicule and reduced to a figurehead status in Buddhist texts,^[14] shown as a god that suffers rebirth and redeath.^[13] In the Jainism traditions, unlike Buddhism and Hinduism, Indra is not the king of Gods- the enlightened leaders (called Tirthankaras or Jinas), but King of superhumans residing in Swarga-Loka, and very much a part of Jain rebirth cosmology.^[15] He is also the one who appears with his wife Indrani to celebrate the auspicious moments in the life of a Jain [Tirthankara](#), an iconography that suggests the king and queen of superhumans residing in heaven -Swarga reverentially marking the spiritual journey of a Jina.^{[16][17]} Indra's iconography shows him wielding a lightning thunderbolt known as *Vajra*, riding on a [white elephant](#) known as [Airavata](#).^{[12][18]} In Buddhist iconography the elephant sometimes features three heads, while Jaina icons sometimes show the elephant with five heads. Sometimes a single elephant is shown with four symbolic tusks.^[12] Indra's heavenly home is on or near [Mount Meru](#) (also called Sumeru).^{[13][19]}



Indra on his elephant, guarding the entrance of the 1st century BCE Buddhist Cave 19 at [Bhaja Caves](#) (Maharashtra).^[20]



Buddhist relief from [Loriyan Tangai](#), showing Indra paying homage to the Buddha at the [Indrasala Cave](#), 2nd century CE, [Gandhara](#).

The etymological roots of Indra are unclear, and it has been a contested topic among scholars since the 19th-century, one with many proposals.

[21] The significant proposals have been:

- root *ind-u*, or "rain drop", based on the Vedic mythology that he conquered rain and brought it down to earth.^{[12][21]}
- root *ind*, or "equipped with great power". This was proposed by Vopadeva.^[12]
- root *idh* or "kindle", and *ina* or "strong".^{[22][23]}
- root *indha*, or "igniter", for his ability to bring light and power (*indriya*) that ignites the vital forces of life (*prana*). This is based on *Shatapatha Brahmana*.^[24]
- root *idam-dra*, or "It seeing" which is a reference to the one who first perceived the self-sufficient metaphysical *Brahman*. This is based on *Aitareya Upanishad*.^[12]
- roots in ancient Indo-European, Indo-Aryan deities.^[25] For example, states John Colarusso, as a reflex of proto-Indo-European **h₂nér-*, Greek *anēr*, Sabine *nerō*, Avestan *nar-*, Umbrian *nerus*, Old Irish *nert*, Ossetic *nart*, and others which all refer to "most manly" or "hero".^[25]

Colonial era scholarship proposed that Indra shares etymological roots with *Zend Andra* derived from Old High German *Antra*, or *Jedru* of Old Slavonic, but *Max Muller* critiqued these proposals as untenable.^{[21][26]}

Later scholarship has linked Vedic Indra to the European *Aynar* (the Great One), *Abaza*, *Ubykh* and *Innara* of Hittite mythology.^{[25][27]}

Colarusso suggests a Pontic^[note 1] origin and that both the phonology and the context of Indra in Indian religions is best explained from Indo-Aryan roots and a *Circassian* etymology (i.e. **inra*).^[25]

Other languages^[edit]

For other languages, he is also known as

- **Bengali**: ইন্দ্র (*Indro*)
- **Burmese**: သိကြားမင်း (pronounced [ðədʒá míŋ])
- **Chinese**: 帝释天 (*Dìshìtiān*)
- **Indonesian/Malay**: (*Indera*)
- **Japanese**: 帝釈天 (*Taishakuten*).^[28]
- **Javanese**: Bathara Indra

- **Kannada:** ಇಂದ್ರ (*Indra*)
- **Khmer:** ព្រះឥន្ទ្រ (ព្រះឥន្ទ្រ) (pronounced [\[preah ʔən\]](#))
- **Lao:** ພະອິນ (*Pha In*) or ພະອຳອິນ (*Pha Nya In*)
- **Malayalam:** ഇന്ദ്രൻ (*Indran*)
- **Mon:** ၵုၵ် (*In*)
- **Tai Lue:** ຫຼີຍ (*In*) or ຫຼີຍາຍ (*Pha Ya In*)
- **Tamil:** இந்திரன் (*Inthiran*)
- **Telugu:** ఇంద్రుడు (*Indrudu* or *Indra*)
- **Thai:** พระอินทร์ (*Phra In*)

Indra has many epithets in the Indian religions, notably Śakra (शक्र, powerful one), Vṛṣan (वृषन्, mighty), Vṛtrahan (वृत्रहन्, slayer of [Vṛtra](#)), Meghavāhana (मेघवाहन, he whose vehicle is cloud), Devarāja (देवराज, king of deities), Devendra (देवेन्द्र, the lord of deities),^[29] Surendra (सुरेन्द्र, chief of deities), Svargapati (स्वर्गपति, the lord of heaven), Vajrapāṇī (वज्रपाणि, he who has thunderbolt (Vajra) in his hand) and Vāsava (वासव, lord of Vasus).

Origins^{[\[edit\]](#)}



[Banteay Srei](#) temple's pediment carvings depict Indra mounts on [Airavata](#), Cambodia.

Indra is of ancient but unclear origin. Aspects of Indra as a deity are

cognate to other Indo-European gods; they are either [thunder gods](#) such as [Thor](#), [Perun](#), and [Zeus](#) who share parts of his heroic mythologies, act as king of gods, and all are linked to "rain and thunder".^[30]

The similarities between Indra of Hindu mythologies and of [Thor](#) of Nordic and Germanic mythologies are significant, states Max Muller. Both Indra and Thor are storm gods, with powers over lightning and thunder, both carry hammer or equivalent, for both the weapon returns to their hand after they hurl it, both are associated with bulls in the earliest layer of respective texts, both use thunder as a battle-cry, both are heroic leaders, both protectors of mankind, both are described with legends about "milking the cloud-cows", both are benevolent giants, gods of strength, of life, of marriage and the healing gods, both are worshipped in respective texts on mountains and in forests.^[31]

Michael Janda suggests that Indra has origins in the Indo-European **trigw-welumos* [or rather **trigw-t-welumos*] "smasher of the enclosure" (of [Vritra](#), [Vala](#)) and *diye-snūtyos* "impeller of streams" (the liberated rivers, corresponding to Vedic *apam ajas* "agitator of the waters").^[32] Brave and heroic Innara or Inra, which sounds like Indra, is mentioned among the gods of the [Mitanni](#), a [Hurrian-speaking people](#) of Hittite region.^[33]

Indra as a deity had a presence in northeastern [Asia minor](#), as evidenced by the inscriptions on the Boghaz-köi clay tablets dated to about 1400 BCE. This tablet mentions a treaty, but its significance is in four names it includes reverentially as *Mi-it-ra*, *U-ru-w-na*, *In-da-ra* and *Na-sa-at-ti-ia*. These are respectively, Mitra, Varuna, Indra and Nasatya-Asvin of the Vedic pantheon as revered deities, and these are also found in Avestan pantheon but with Indra and Naonhaitya as demons. This at least suggests that Indra and his fellow deities were in vogue in South Asia and Asia minor by about mid 2nd-millennium BCE.^{[22][34]}

Indra is praised as the highest god in 250 hymns of the [Rigveda](#) – a [Hindu](#) scripture dated to have been composed sometime between 1700 and 1100 BCE. He is co-praised as the supreme in another 50 hymns, thus making him one of the most celebrated Vedic deities.^[22] He is also mentioned in ancient Indo-Iranian literature, but with a major inconsistency when contrasted with the Vedas. In the Vedic literature, Indra is a heroic god. In the Avestan (ancient, pre-Islamic Iranian) texts

such as *Vd.* 10.9, *Dk.* 9.3 and *Gbd* 27.6-34.27, Indra – or accurately Andra^[35] – is a gigantic demon who opposes truth.^{[25][note 2]} In the Vedic texts, Indra kills the archenemy and demon Vritra who threatens mankind. In the Avestan texts, Vritra is not found.^[35]

Indra is called *vr̥traghná-* (literally, "slayer of obstacles") in the Vedas, which corresponds to *Verethragna* of the Zoroastrian noun *verethragna-*. According to David Anthony, the Old Indic religion probably emerged among Indo-European immigrants in the contact zone between the *Zeravshan River* (present-day *Uzbekistan*) and (present-day) Iran.^[36]

It was "a syncretic mixture of old Central Asian and new Indo-European elements",^[36] which borrowed "distinctive religious beliefs and practices"^[37] from the *Bactria–Margiana Culture*.^[37] At least 383 non-Indo-European words were found in this culture, including the god Indra and the ritual drink *Soma*.^[38]

According to Anthony, Many of the qualities of Indo-Iranian god of might/victory, *Verethraghna*, were transferred to the god Indra, who became the central deity of the developing Old Indic culture. Indra was the subject of 250 hymns, a quarter of the *Rig Veda*. He was associated more than any other deity with *Soma*, a stimulant drug (perhaps derived from *Ephedra*) probably borrowed from the BMAC religion. His rise to prominence was a peculiar trait of the Old Indic speakers.^[39]

Hinduism^[edit]



Indra is typically featured as a guardian deity on the east side of a [Hindu temple](#). Indra was a prominent deity in the Vedic era of Hinduism. ^[22]

Vedic texts^[edit]

Over a quarter of the 1,028 hymns of the *Rigveda* mention Indra, making him the most referred to deity than any other. ^{[22][40]} These hymns present a complex picture of Indra, but some aspects of Indra are oft repeated. Of these, the most common theme is where he as the god with thunderbolt kills the evil serpent Vritra that held back rains, and thus released rains and land nourishing rivers. ^[21] For example, the Rigvedic hymn 1.32 dedicated to Indra reads:

इन्द्रस्य नु वीर्याणि प्र वोचं
यानि चकार प्रथमानि वज्री
।
अहन्नहिमन्वपस्ततर्द प्र
वक्षणा अभिनत्पर्वतानाम् ॥
१।।
अहन्नहिं पर्वते शिश्रियाणं
त्वष्टास्मै वज्रं स्वर्यं ततक्ष ।
वाश्वा इव धेनवः स्यन्दमाना
अञ्जः समुद्रमव जग्मुरापः
॥२॥

—Rigveda, 1.32.1–2^[42]

Let me tell you the manly deeds of
Indra, which he first accomplished,
bolt-weaponed,
He slew the serpent, opened up
waters, cleft in twain the belly of
mountains, ॥ 1 ॥
He slew the serpent on the mountain,
with heavenly bolt made by Tvastar,
Like lowing cattle downward sped the
waters, then flowed to the ocean. ॥
2 ॥^[41]

The hymns of *Rigveda* declare him to be the "king that moves and moves not", the friend of mankind who holds the different tribes on earth together.^[43] In one interpretation by Oldenberg, the hymns are referring to the snaking thunderstorm clouds that gather with bellowing winds (Vritra), Indra is then seen as the storm god who intervenes in these clouds with his thunderbolts, which then release the rains nourishing the parched land, crops and thus humanity.^[44] |

In another interpretation by Hillebrandt, Indra is a symbolic sun god (*Surya*) and Vritra is a symbolic winter-giant (historic mini cycles of ice age, cold) in the earliest, not the later, hymns of *Rigveda*.

The Vritra is an ice-demon of colder central Asia and northern latitudes, who holds back the water. Indra is the one who releases the water from the winter demon, an idea that later metamorphosed into his role as storm god.^[44] According to Griswold, this is not a completely convincing interpretation, because Indra is simultaneously a lightning god, a rain god and a river-helping god in the Vedas. Further, the Vritra demon that Indra slew is best understood as any obstruction, whether it be clouds that refuse to release rain or mountains or snow that hold back the water.^[44]

Even though Indra is declared as the king of gods in some verses, there is no consistent subordination of other gods to Indra. In Vedic thought,

all gods and goddesses are equivalent and aspects of the same eternal abstract [Brahman](#), none consistently superior, none consistently inferior. All gods obey Indra, but all gods also obey Varuna, Vishnu, Rudra and others when the situation arises. Further, Indra also accepts and follows the instructions of Savitr (solar deity).^[45] Indra, like all Vedic deities, is a part of [henotheistic](#) theology of ancient India.^[46]

Indra is not a visible object of nature in the Vedic texts, nor is he a personification of any object, but that agent which causes the lightning, the rains and the rivers to flow.^[47] His myths and adventures in the Vedic literature are numerous, ranging from harnessing the rains, cutting through mountains to help rivers flow, helping land becoming fertile, unleashing sun by defeating the clouds, warming the land by overcoming the winter forces, winning the light and dawn for mankind, putting milk in the cows, rejuvenating the immobile into something mobile and prosperous, and in general, he is depicted as removing any and all sorts of obstacles to human progress.^[48] The Vedic prayers to Indra, states [Jan Gonda](#), generally ask "produce success of this rite, throw down those who hate the materialized [Brahman](#)".^[49]

Indra is often presented as the twin brother of [Agni](#) (fire) – another major Vedic deity.^[50] Yet, he is also presented to be the same, states Max Muller, as in Rigvedic hymn 2.1.3, which states, "Thou Agni, art Indra, a bull among all beings; thou art the wide-ruling Vishnu, worthy of adoration. Thou art the Brahman, (...)."^[51] He is also part of one of many Vedic trinities as "Agni, Indra and Surya", representing the "creator-maintainer-destroyer" aspects of existence in Hindu thought.^{[40][note 3]}

Upanishads^[edit]

The ancient [Aitareya Upanishad](#) equates Indra, along with other deities, with [Atman](#) (soul, self) in the Vedanta's spirit of internalization of rituals and gods. It begins with its cosmological theory in verse 1.1.1 by stating that, "in the beginning, Atman, verily one only, was here - no other blinking thing whatever; he bethought himself: let me now create worlds".^{[55][56]} This soul, which the text refers to as Brahman as well, then proceeds to create the worlds and beings in those worlds wherein all Vedic gods and goddesses such as sun-god, moon-god, Agni and

other divinities become active cooperative organs of the body.^{[56][57][58]}

The Atman thereafter creates food, and thus emerges a sustainable non-sentient universe, according to the Upanishad. The eternal Atman then enters each living being making the universe full of sentient beings, but these living beings fail to perceive their Atman. The first one to see the Atman as Brahman, asserts the Upanishad, said, "*idam adarsha* or 'I have seen It'.^[56] Others then called this first seer as *Idam-dra* or 'It-seeing', which over time came to be cryptically known as 'Indra', because, claims *Aitareya Upanishad*, everyone including the gods like short nicknames.^[59] The passing mention of Indra in this Upanishad, states Alain Daniélou, is a symbolic folk etymology.^[12]

The section 3.9 of the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* connects Indra to thunder, thunderbolt and release of waters.^[60] In section 5.1 of the *Avyakta Upanishad*, Indra is praised as he who embodies the qualities of all gods.^[40]

Post-Vedic texts^[edit]



[Krishna](#) holding [Govardhan hill](#) from [Smithsonian Institution](#)'s collections

In post-Vedic texts, Indra is depicted as an intoxicated hedonistic god, his importance declines, and he evolves into a minor deity in comparison to others in the Hindu pantheon, such as [Shiva](#), [Vishnu](#), or [Devi](#). In Hindu texts, Indra is some times known as an aspect (avatar) of [Shiva](#).^[40]

He is depicted as the father of [Vali](#) in the *Ramayana* and [Arjuna](#) in the

[Mahabharata](#).^[14] He becomes a source of nuisance rains in the Puranas, out of anger and with an intent to hurt mankind. But, Krishna as an avatar of Vishnu, comes to the rescue by lifting Mount Govardhana on his fingertip, and letting mankind shelter under the mountain till Indra exhausts his anger and relents.^[14] Also, according to Mahabharata Indra, disguised himself as a Brahmin approached Karna and asked for his kavach and kundal as a charity. Although being aware of his true identity, Karna peeled off his kavach and kundal and fulfilled the wish of Indra. Pleased by this act Indra gifted Karna a dart called Vasavi Shakthi.

Sangam literature (300 BCE–300 AD)^[edit]

[Sangam literature](#) of the [Tamil language](#) contains more stories about Indra by various authors. In [Silapathikaram](#) Indra is described as *Maalai venkudai mannavan* (மாலைவெண் குடை மன்னவன்), literally meaning Indra with the pearl-garland and white umbrella.^[61]

The [Sangam literature](#) also describes Indhira Vizha (festival for Indra), the festival for want of rain, celebrated for one full month starting from the full moon in Ootrai (later name – Cittirai) and completed on the full moon in Puyaazhi (Vaikaasi) (which coincides with Buddhapurnima). It is described in the epic [Cilapatikaram](#) in detail.^[62]

Relations with other gods^[edit]

In the Hindu religion, he is married to Shachi, also known as Indrani or Pulomaja.^[63]

Indra and Shachi have two sons: [Chitragupta](#) and [Jayanta](#); and two daughters: [Jayanti](#) and [Devasena](#). Goddess Jayanti is the spouse of [Shukra](#), while Goddess Devasena marries the war-god [Kartikeya](#).^[64]

Mythology^[edit]

In the *Brahmavaivarta Purana*,^[65] Indra defeats Vritra and releases the waters. Indra asks Vishvakarma to build him a palace, but ultimately decides to leave his life of luxury to become a hermit and seek wisdom. Horrified, Indra's wife Shachi asks the priest Brihaspati to change her

husband's mind. He teaches Indra to see the virtues of both the spiritual life and the worldly life. Thus, at the end of the story, Indra learns how to pursue wisdom while still fulfilling his kingly duties.^{[[citation needed](#)]}

Iconography^{[[edit](#)]}



Indra's iconography shows him holding a [thunderbolt](#) or [Vajra](#) and a sword. In addition he is shown on top of his elephant [Airavata](#), which reinforces his characteristic of [King of the Gods](#).

In *Rigveda*, Indra is described as strong willed, armed with a thunderbolt, riding a chariot:

May the strong Heaven make thee the Strong wax stronger: Strong, for thou art borne by thy two strong Bay Horses. So, fair of cheek, with mighty chariot, mighty, uphold us, strong-willed, thunder armed, in battle.
— RigVeda, Book 5, Hymn XXXVI: Griffith^{[[66](#)]}

Indra's weapon, which he used to kill evil Vritra, is the [Vajra](#) or thunderbolt. Other alternate iconographic symbolism for him includes a [bow](#) (sometimes as a colorful rainbow), a sword, a [net](#), a noose, a hook, or a conch.^{[[67](#)]} The thunderbolt of Indra is called Bhaudhara.^{[[68](#)]} In the post-Vedic period, he rides a large, four-tusked white elephant

called [Airavata](#).^[12] In sculpture and relief artworks in temples, he typically sits on an elephant or is near one. When he is shown to have two, he holds the Vajra and a bow.^[69]

In the *Shatapatha Brahmana* and in Shaktism traditions, Indra is stated to be same as goddess [Shodashi](#) (Tripura Sundari), and her iconography is described similar to those of Indra.^[70]

The [rainbow](#) is called Indra's [Bow](#) (Sanskrit: *indradhanus* इन्द्रधनुस्).^[67]

Buddhism^[edit]

The Buddhist cosmology places Indra above Mount Sumeru, in Trayastrimsha heaven.^[4] He resides and rules over one of the six realms of rebirth, the *Devas* realm of [Saṃsāra](#), that is widely sought in the Buddhist tradition.^{[71][note 4]} Rebirth in the realm of Indra is a consequence of very good [Karma](#) (Pali: *kamma*) and accumulated merit during a human life.^[74]

In [Buddhism](#), Indra is commonly called by his other name, [Śakra](#) or Sakka, ruler of the *Trāyastriṃśa* heaven.^[75] Śakra is sometimes referred to as *Devānām Indra* or "Lord of the Devas". Buddhist texts also refer to Indra by numerous names and epithets, as is the case with Hindu and Jain texts. For example, Asvaghosha's *Buddhacarita* in different sections refers to Indra with terms such as "the thousand eyed",^[76]

Puramdara,^[77] *Lekharshabha*,^[78] *Mahendra*, *Marutvat*, *Valabhid* and *Maghavat*.^[79] Elsewhere, he is known as *Devarajan* (literally, "the king of gods"). These names reflect a large overlap between Hinduism and Buddhism, and the adoption of many Vedic terminology and concepts into Buddhist thought.^[80] Even the term *Śakra*, which means "mighty", appears in the Vedic texts such as in hymn 5.34 of the *Rigveda*.^{[12][81]}

In [Theravada Buddhism](#) Indra is referred to as Indā in Evening Chanting such as the Udissanādiṭṭhānagāthā (Iminā).^[82]



The Buddha (middle) is flanked by Brahma (left) and Indra, possibly the oldest surviving Buddhist artwork.^[83]

The [Bimaran Casket](#) made of gold inset with garnet, dated to be around 60 CE, but some proposals dating it to the 1st century BCE, is among the earliest archaeological evidences available that establish the importance of Indra in Buddhist mythology. The artwork shows the Buddha flanked by gods [Brahma](#) and Indra.^{[83][84]}

In [China](#), [Korea](#), and [Japan](#), he is known by the characters 帝釋天 (Chinese: 釋提桓因, pinyin: shì dī huán yīn, Korean: "Je-seok-cheon" or 桓因 *Hwan-in*, Japanese: "Tai-shaku-ten", [kanji](#): 帝釈天). In Japan, Indra always appears opposite [Brahma](#) (梵天, Japanese: "Bonten") in Buddhist art. Brahma and Indra are revered together as protectors of the historical Buddha (Chinese: 釋迦, [kanji](#): 釈迦, also known as [Shakyamuni](#)), and are frequently shown giving the infant Buddha his first bath. Although Indra is often depicted like a [bodhisattva](#) in the Far East, typically in [Tang dynasty](#) costume, his iconography also includes a martial aspect, wielding a thunderbolt from atop his elephant mount.
[citation needed]



Many official seals in southeast Asia feature Indra.^[85] Above: seal of Bangkok, Thailand.

In some schools of Buddhism and in Hinduism , the image of [Indra's net](#) is a metaphor for the emptiness of all things, and at the same time a metaphor for the understanding of the universe as a web of connections and interdependences^[86]^[circular reference].

In Japan, Indra is one of the twelve Devas, as guardian deities, who are found in or around Buddhist temples ([Jūni-ten](#), 十二天).^[87] In Japan, Indra has been called "Taishaku-ten".^[88] He joins these other eleven Devas of Buddhism, found in Japan and other parts of southeast Asia: Agni (Ka-ten), Yama (Enma-ten), Nirrti (Rasetsu-ten), Vayu (Fu-ten), [Ishana](#) (Ishana-ten), Kubera (Tamon-ten), Varuna (Sui-ten), Brahma (Bon-ten), Prithvi (Chi-ten), Surya (Nit-ten), and Chandra (Gat-ten).^[88]^[89]^[90]

The ceremonial name of [Bangkok](#) claims that the city was "given by Indra and built by [Vishvakarman](#)."^[91]

Jainism^[edit]



Left: Indra as a guardian deity sitting on elephant in Jain cave temple at [Ellora](#)



Right: Indra, Indrani with elephant at the 9th-century [Mirpur Jain Temple](#) in Rajasthan (rebuilt 15th-century).

Indra in [Jain](#) mythology always serves the [Tirthankara](#) teachers. Indra most commonly appears in stories related to Tirthankaras, in which Indra himself manages and celebrates the [five auspicious events](#) in that Tirthankara's life, such as Chavan kalyanak, [Janma](#) kalyanak, [Diksha](#) kalyanak, [Kevala Jnana](#) kalyanak, and [moksha](#) kalyanak.^[92]

There are sixty-four Indras in Jaina literature, each ruling over different heavenly realms where heavenly souls who have not yet gained Kaivalya ([moksha](#)) are reborn according to Jainism.^{[16][93]} Among these many Indras, the ruler of the first Kalpa heaven is the Indra who is known as *Saudharma* in [Digambara](#), and *Sakra* in [Śvētāmbara](#) tradition. He is most preferred, discussed and often depicted in Jaina caves and marble temples, often with his wife Indrani.^{[93][94]}

They greet the devotee as he or she walks in, flank the entrance to an idol of [Jina](#) (conqueror), and lead the gods as they are shown celebrating the five auspicious moments in a Jina's life, including his birth.^[16]

These Indra-related stories are enacted by laypeople in Jainism tradition during special Puja (worship) or festive remembrances.^{[16][95]} In south Indian [Digambara](#) Jaina community, Indra is also the title of hereditary priests who preside over Jain temple functions.^[16]

See also

[\[edit\]](#)

- [Rigvedic deities](#)
- [Indreshwar](#)
- [Deva](#)
- [Nahusha](#)
- [Aditya](#)
- [Lokapala](#)
- [Dikpala](#)
- [Indraloka](#)
- [Astra](#)
- [Astra of Indrajit](#)
- [Indra Dhwaja](#)
- [Indrajāla](#)
- [Vajra](#), also *Bhaudhara*
- [Vijaya Dhanush](#)
- [Trāyastriṃśa](#)
- [Nat](#)
- [Ten-bu](#)
- [Dharmapala](#)

- [Sakra](#) or *Sakka*
- [Indranama](#)
- [Saman](#)
- [Taishakuten](#)
- [Thagyamin](#)
- [Vajrapani](#)
- [Yuanshi Tianzun](#)
- [Jade Emperor](#)
- [Hwanin](#)

Indra

INDIAN DEITY

WRITTEN BY: [Wendy Doniger](#)

[See Article History](#)

Alternative Titles: Śakra, Inda, Sakka

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Indra>

Indra, in [Hindu](#) mythology, the king of the gods. He is one of the main gods of the [Rigveda](#) and is the Indo-European cousin of the German Wotan, Norse [Odin](#), Greek [Zeus](#), and Roman [Jupiter](#).

In early religious texts, Indra plays a variety of roles. As king, he leads cattle raids against the *dasas*, or [dasyus](#), native inhabitants of the lands over which his people range.

He brings rain as god of the thunderbolt, and he is the

great warrior who conquers the anti-gods ([asuras](#)). He also defeats innumerable human and superhuman enemies, most famously the dragon [Vritra](#), a leader of the *dasas* and a demon of drought. Vritra is accused as a dragon of hoarding the waters and the rains, as a *dasa* of stealing cows, and as an anti-god of hiding the Sun.

Indra is strengthened for those feats by drinks of the elixir of immortality, the [soma](#), which priests offer to him in the sacrifice.

Among his allies are the [Rudras](#) (or Maruts), who ride the clouds and direct storms. Indra is sometimes referred to as “the thousand-eyed.”

In later [Hinduism](#), Indra is no longer worshipped but plays the important mythological roles of god of rain, regent of the heavens, and guardian of the east.

Later texts note that break in the worship of Indra. In the [Mahabharata](#), Indra fathers the great hero [Arjuna](#) and tries in vain to prevent the god of fire, [Agni](#), from burning a great forest.

In the [Puranas](#), ancient collections of Hindu myths and legends, [Krishna](#), an [avatar](#) of [Vishnu](#), persuades the cowherds of Gokula (or Vraja, modern Gokul) to stop their worship of Indra. Enraged, Indra sends down torrents of rain, but Krishna lifts Mount Govardhana on his fingertip and gives the people shelter under it for

seven days until Indra relents and pays him homage.



Krishna lifting Mount Govardhana, Mewar miniature painting, early 18th century; in a private collection.

P. Chandra

In painting and sculpture, Indra is often depicted riding his white [elephant](#), Airavata. Indra also plays a part in the [Jain](#) and [Buddhist](#) mythology of India.

When [Mahavira](#), the Jain saviour and reformer, cuts off his hair to signify his renunciation of the world, Indra, as king of the gods, receives the hair into his hands.

Buddhist mythology sometimes mocks Indra and sometimes portrays him as a mere figurehead.